

**DOCUMENT RESUME**

ED 407 031

JC 970 222

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TITLE Recruitment Dynamic of Foreign Students into United States Postsecondary Institutions: The Implications for Education and International Development.  
PUB DATE Feb 97  
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Community Colleges for International Development (20th, Orlando, FL, February 2-4, 1997).  
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)  
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS College Role; Community Colleges; \*Economic Development; Enrollment; \*Enrollment Trends; \*Foreign Countries; \*Foreign Students; Higher Education; \*International Education; Literacy; Technology Transfer; Two Year Colleges

## **ABSTRACT**

The enrollment of foreign students in U.S. postsecondary educational institutions has far reaching implications for world education and international development. An analysis of enrollment data, however, indicates a wide variation in enrollment by region and country. In 1992-93, approximately 59% of the 439,000 international students enrolled in American colleges and universities came from South, Central, and East Asian countries, and data for 1993-94 showed dramatic increases for these areas. In contrast, between 1985 and 1994 enrollment of students from the United Kingdom, Canada, and Thailand increased only moderately, while the enrollment of Middle Eastern, African, and Latin American students declined steadily. China, Korea, and India showed very sharp increases in enrollment; while enrollment in Nigeria, Venezuela, and Iran declined drastically. Enrollment of students in Malaysia showed a moderate decline. Regions of Africa and Latin America that have experienced sharp declines in enrollment will witness low quality education, limited transfer of modern technology, less economic development, decreased literacy rates, and generally low standards of living. Community colleges, with their open door policy and quality education system, can make a difference if they recruit students from regions of the world with declining enrollment. (HAA)

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# Recruitment Dynamic of Foreign Students into the United States Postsecondary Institutions: The Implications for Education and International Development

Fidelis Njide Ubadigbo

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JC 970 222

20th ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION  
"CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:  
TWENTY YEARS OF EXAMPLARY PRACTICES"

FEBRUARY 2 - 4, 1997  
GROSVENOR RESORT  
WALT DISNEY WORLD, ORLANDO, FL

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Title: Recruitment Dynamic of Foreign Students into United States Postsecondary  
Institutions: The Implications for Education and International Development

Topic Area: Recruiting International Students

**Abstract**

American education institutions are to the modern world what Alexandria in Egypt was to the ancient world during the beginning of the 3rd century. The foreign student enrollment in United States postsecondary institutions has far reaching implications for world education and international development. It has been estimated that 59 percent of 439,000 international students enrolled in American colleges and universities in the 1992/93 academic year came from South, Central, and East Asian countries.

An analysis of international student enrollment data in United States postsecondary institutions showed dramatic enrollment increases for East Asia, South Central Asia, and South East Asia, with 171,279 students (23.5 percent) from East Asia alone in 1993/94 academic year. Enrollment of students from Europe and North America (Canada) increased moderately while that of Middle East, Africa, and Latin America regions showed steady decline between 1985 and 1994.

The variation in enrollment was highly pronounced when data were analyzed by countries. Foreign student enrollment from the United Kingdom, Canada, and Thailand had moderate increases between 1985/86 and 1993/94. China, Korea, and India had very sharp increases in enrollment while those from Nigeria, Venezuela, and Iran declined drastically. Malaysia showed a moderate decline. Foreign student enrollment data from Iowa's 15 community colleges showed similar results.

This dramatic variation in student enrollment from certain regions into United States institutions of higher learning will effect global education and development. Regions of Africa and Latin America with sharp decline in enrollment, will witness low quality education, limited transfer of modern technology, less economic development, decreased literacy rates, and low standards of living. In regions of Asia, Europe, and North America, life will be different. Community colleges with their open door policy and quality education system, will make a difference if they recruit students from regions of the world with declining enrollment.

Title: Recruitment dynamics of foreign students into United States postsecondary institutions: The implications for education and international development

American education institutions are to the modern world what Alexandria in Egypt was to the ancient world during the beginning of the 3rd century. In recent years, the recruitment of foreign students into the American institutions of higher learning has been skewed to include a large proportion of Asian students. There has been a continuous regionalized increase in the number of students enrolled in higher institution in the United States. This current recruitment trend in the institutions of higher learning will hurt international development in those countries with limited resources to pursue quality education in the United States Community college system as a postsecondary institutions has a part to play in the distribution of knowledge through recruitment of students from all over the world. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 71 million students are enrolled in higher education programs out of 1 billion student who enrolled in schools worldwide (page 417). Out of this number, 439,000 foreign students were enrolled in the United States colleges and universities in 1992/93 academic year, an increase from the 1991/92 academic year. Out of this number, approximately 59 percent of the students came from South and East Asian countries.

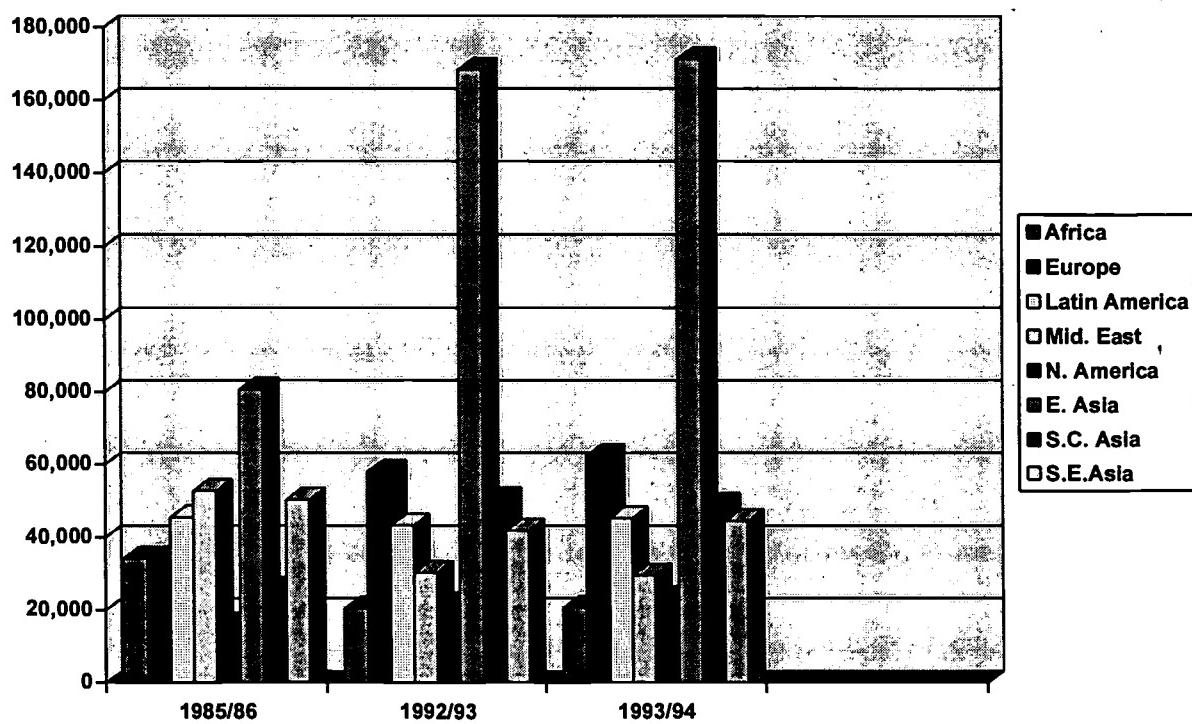
Table 1. Foreign students enrollment trend in United States institutions of higher learning by region and the percentage of admissions

World Region	1985/86		1992/93		1993/94	
	Enrollment	Percent	Enrollment	Percent	Enrollment	Percent
Africa	34,190	9.9	20,520	4.7	20,569	4.6
Europe	34,310	10.0	58,010	13.2	62,442	13.9
Latin America	45,480	13.2	43,250	9.9	45,246	10.1
Middle East	52,720	15.3	30,240	6.9	29,509	6.6
North America	16,030	4.7	21,550	4.9	23,288	5.2
East Asia	80,720	23.5	168,410	38.4	171,279	38.1
South Central Asia	25,800	7.5	50,430	11.5	48,941	10.9
South East Asia	50,310	14.6	41,830	9.5	44,461	9.9
Total	3,395,60		4,342,40		4,457,35	

The Digest of Education Statistics (1995) data of foreign students enrollment in the American postsecondary institutions was divided into eight regions including Africa, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America (mainly Canada), East Asia, South Central Asia, and South East Asia. The results shows that East Asian student enrollment in American postsecondary institutions has a dramatic increased of 14.6 percent between 1985/86 and 1993/94 academic years. At the same time other regions of the world are witnessing a drastic decline in the number of foreign students enrollment.

The recruitment trend shows that foreign students enrollment from East Asia shows a sizable increase in postsecondary enrollment. In the 1985/86 academic year, 80,720 students (23.5 percent) came from East Asia followed by Middle East with 52,720 student (15.3 percent). Then in 1991/92 academic year, the number of East Asian students enrolled in the United States institutions of higher learning rose to 168,410 and further clocked 171,279 students in the 1993/94 academic year. Within the same educational period, European student population increased from 34,310 in 1985/86 to 58,010 in 1992/93 and further increased to 62,442 students (13.9 percent) during the 1993/94 academic year.

**Fig 1. Foreign Students Enrollment by Trend in the United States Institutions of Higher Learning by Regions**



Digest of Education Statistics 1995 (National Center for Education Statistics)

While students from Asian and European regions are increasing in number, enrollment of students from Africa, Latin America, and Middle East regions was declining. The enrollment of students from the African region decreased from 34,190 (9.9 percent) in 1985/86 academic year

to 20,520 students in 1991/92. The enrollment further declined to 20, 569 (4.6 percent ) during the 1993/94 academic year. Middle East enrollment also showed a downward trend from 52,720 students in the 1985/86 to 30,240 in 1991/92 and slightly down to 29,509 in the 1993/94 academic year. The student enrollment from Latin American region (Canada excluded) had a slight decline to 43,250 students in 1991/92 academic year but quickly rose back to near its enrollment of 45,480 students in the 1985/86 academic year.

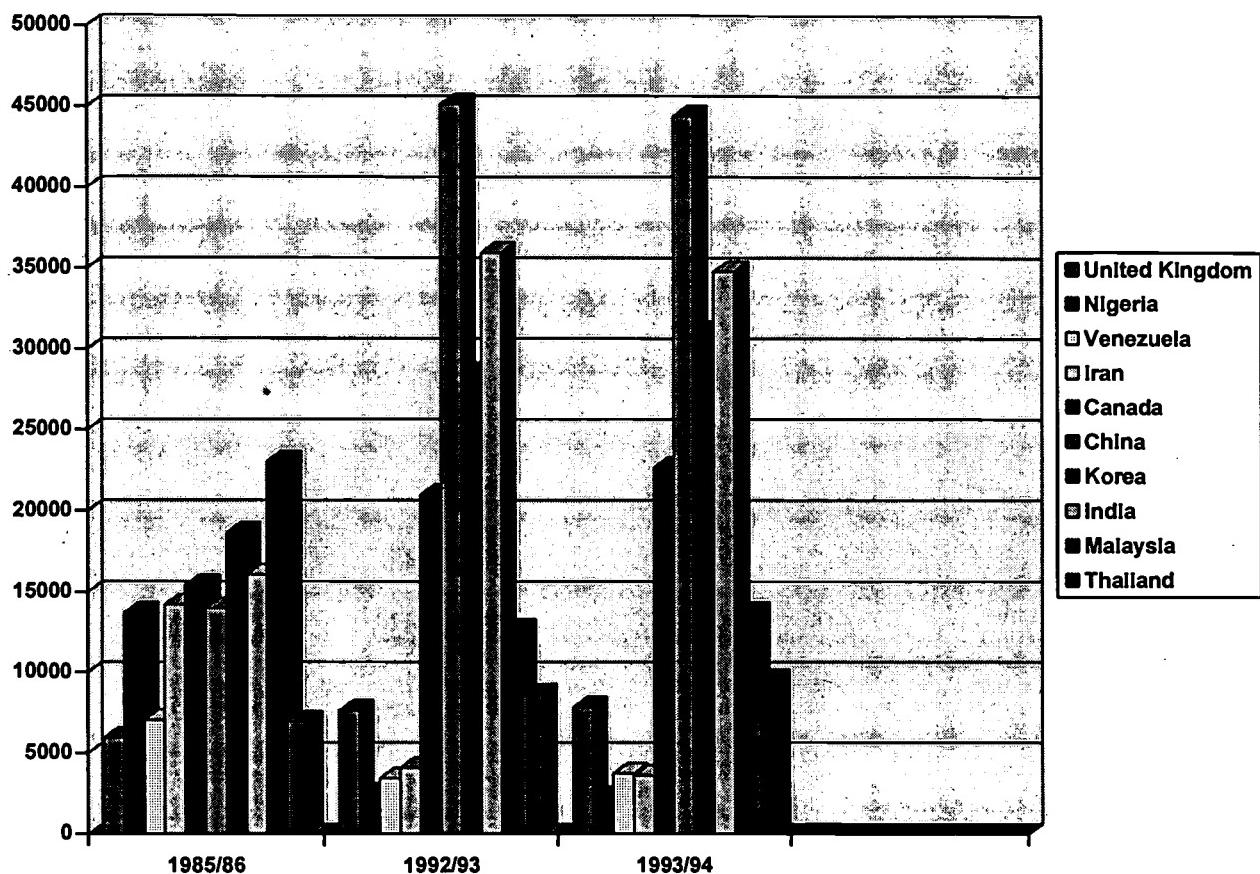
Further analysis was conducted using selected countries from these eight regions. About ten countries including United Kingdom, Nigeria, Venezuela, Iran, Canada, China, Korea, India, Malaysia, and Thailand were selected for this trend analysis..

Table 2. Foreign students enrollment trend in United States institutions of higher learning from selected countries and the percentage of admissions

COUNTRY	1985/86		1992/93		1993/94	
	Enrollment	Percent	Enrollment	Percent	Enrollment	Percent
United Kingdom	5,940	1.7	7,630	1.7	7,828	1.7
Nigeria	13,710	4.0	2,490	0.6	2,285	0.5
Venezuela	7,040	2.0	3,440	0.8	3,742	0.8
Iran	14,210	4.1	4,090	0.9	3,621	0.8
Canada	15,410	4.5	20,970	4.8	22,655	5.0
China	13,980	4.1	45,130	10.3	44,381	9.9
Korea	18,660	5.4	28,520	6.5	31,076	6.9
India	16,070	4.7	35,950	8.2	34,796	7.7
Malaysia	23,020	6.7	12,660	2.9	13,718	3.1
Thailand	6,940	2.0	8,630	2.0	9,537	2.1

The result (Table 2) shows that United Kingdom maintained a stable enrollment statusque at 1.7 percent of United States foreign student enrollment population. There was a slight increase in the enrollment of students from the United Kingdom from 5,940 to 7630, and further to 7828 in 1985/86, 1992/93, and 1993/4 academic years respectively. Student enrollment from Korea increased substantially (18,660 in 1985/86 to 31,076 in 1993/94), while enrollment of students from India more than doubled from 16,070 in 1985/86 to 34,796 in 1993/94. Malaysia showed a slight decrease from 23,020 in 1985/86 to 13,718 in 1993/94. Thailand on the other hand maintained an average enrollment percentage of 2.0 percent with a moderate increase from 6,940 students in 1985/86 to 9,537 students in 1993/94. Enrollment of students from China increased dramatically from 13,980 in 1985/86 to 45,130 in the 1991/92 academic year with a slight decline of enrollment in the 1993/94 academic year.

Fig 2. Foreign Students Enrollment Trend in the United States Institutions of Higher Learning from Selected Countries.



Countries like Nigeria, Venezuela, and Iran had a drastic decrease in the number of student enrolled in the United Institutions of higher learning. Nigeria decreased from 13,710 student (4.0 percent) in 1985/86 academic year down to 2,490 (0.6 percent) in 1992/93 and further to 2,285 (0.5 percent) in 1993/94 academic year. Venezuela went down from 7,040 (2.0 percent) in 1985/86 to 3,742 (0.8 percent) in 1993/94 while Iran went down from 14,210 (4.1 percent) in 1985/86 to 3,621 (0.8) in 1993/94. On the other hand the population of Chinese students increased from 13,980 students (4.1 percent) in 1985/86 to 44,381 students(9.9 percent) in 1993/94..

A review of state data also showed similar trend in the decline of foreign students enrollment in the community colleges. A summary of data from the Iowa College Student AID Commission (Information Digest of Postsecondary Education in Iowa 1991/92 and 1993/94) shows a dramatic reduction in the number of foreign students enrolled in the 15 Iowa's community college campuses.

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Table 3 Iowa's community college Freshmen student from foreign countries compared to the United States students

Community College	United States Freshmen		Foreign Freshmen	
	1991/92	1993/94	1991/92	1993/94
Des Moines Area Community College	2889	2929	90	0
Eastern Iowa Community College	2246	2239	9	11
Hawkeye Community College	875	1439	0	5
Indian hills community College	1205	1208	6	6
Iowa Central community College	958	864	10	8
Iowa Lakes Community College	605	919	0	0
Iowa Valley Community College	902	767	1	9
Iowa Western Community College	1015	1239	0	11
Kirkwood Community College	2350	2773	118	85
North Iowa Area Community College	1026	807	3	3
Northeast Iowa Community College	763	1142	0	1
Northwest Iowa Community College	288	292	0	0
Southeastern Iowa Community College	1014	973	0	3
Southwestern Community College	632	510	2	7
Western Iowa Tech. Community Coll.	1185	860	0	0
Grand Total	17,953	18,961	235	149

Iowa College Student AID Commission 1991/92 and 1993/94

Out of the 17,953 freshmen students enrolled in Iowa's 15 community colleges in the Fall of 1991/92, only 235 students were foreign students. This numbers have since declined to 149 out of 18,961 freshmen enrolled in the Fall of 1993/94 school year (Table 3).

### Implications for Education and International Development

The dramatic decrease in student enrollment from certain regions into United States institutions of higher learning has far reaching implications for education and development. More alarming is the depletion of enrollment from those areas that have suffered underdevelopment during the last century. The regions of Africa and Latin America have seen the enrollment of their students slashed to a noticeable number with a sizable increase in the number of students from the Asian regions and Europe. This recruitment trend will have far reaching implication for global education and consequently jeopardize the rate of international development in these regions

At this point, development in these regions with declined enrollment has come to a screeching halt. and in this age of technology, the rate of technology transfer to these regions is profound in the poor standard of living among the population. The effect of limited recruitment and admission to students from countries of Africa and Latin America will propel these countries further down into untold hardship as they match with the rest of the world into the 21st century. The fact that these countries have the least number of students exposed to quality education as a result of their limited economic fluidity closes the door of transferring western technology to these regions.

The recruitment trend prepares these regions to match into the 21st century with limited manpower, untrained workforce, and limited technological know-how. Through our recruitment policies, United States institutions of higher learning are creating a big hole in global education. The literacy rates from these regions with decreased enrollment have been the lowest in the world.

**Table 4. Literacy rates of ten countries by gender and their worldwide rankings**

Country	Literacy Rates		Worldwide Ranking	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
United Kingdom	99	99	17	12
Nigeria	25	16	126	117
Venezuela	80	73	59	50
Iran	48	26	97	92
Canada	98	98	21	16
China	25	--	125	--
Korea (South)	94	81	32	41
Korea (North)	90	--	42	--
India	47	19	100	97
Malaysia	59	48	84	78
Thailand	87	70	46	53

World Education Encyclopedia (1988)

The recruitment policy and the enrollment trend so far will drive the literacy rate even further down. We are also not preparing these countries with declining enrollments for the world economic order with sound democratic principles. Community colleges with their open door policy and quality education system, will make a big difference in recruiting students from those regions with declining enrollments.

The current recruitment processes in the United States will catapult East Asia as the center for learning in the 21st century to the detriment of other regions in this analysis. An equitable distribution of enrollment will ensure a balanced economic system for the low economic countries. From this data, we may as well predict where the development and technology of the 21st century will grow. Changing our recruitment policy will stabilize world development and world education.

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